

West Valley Astronomy Club

Monthly Meeting Minutes

Jan 02, 2024

Meeting Location: Beardsley Recreation Center – 12755 W Beardsley Rd, Sun City West, AZ 85375 - #1 Chicory Room

Board Members & Volunteers Present: Bob Randle (President), Paul Bleikamp (Vice President), Bob Colvert Treasurer & Program Director), John Hiatt (Outreach Director), Janie Randle (Membership Director), Bud & Betsy Johnson, Secretary, along with other volunteers, club members, and visitors (= **50 Total Present**).

1 - Opening Remarks: The regular meeting of WVAC was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Bob Randle. Bob introduced himself and thanked everyone in attendance; mentioned that Janie made the cookies! (They were all gone by the meeting's end.)

2 - Speaker: Bob Colvert introduced tonight's speaker, Joshua Abbatiello. Josh has a B.S. Degree in geology and is currently a PhD. Candidate (Geology as well) at the University of South Florida. In the broadest sense, (he says) he is a biogeochemist. He uses techniques of biology, geology, and chemistry to understand the element Phosphorus. He studies how phosphorus pertains to the origin of the earliest molecules billions of years ago and its immense importance to us today. He also relates that information to determining potential for life on other planets.

Topic: Astro-biology from its beginnings as a field to current. It wasn't until the 1950's that Miller-Urey introduced amino acid building blocks in RNA and DNA hypotheses; the biogenic element, phosphate, as the backbone of DNA; plus Exogenous Delivery - life-essential nutrients delivered by meteors striking the Earth.

3 - Awards: Each year, awards are given to individuals who stood out for exceptional help in the club: 1. Larry Matney 2. Maria Bears 3. Stan Schlieper 4. Cori Charles 5. Lois Caldwell. Thank You All!

4 - Future Meetings: The next meeting will be on February 6, 2024 at 7 pm.

5 - Future Outreach Activities

Traditional Academy at Bellaire – Atar Party – January 17 – Wednesday (confirmed)

Surprise Library – January 18 – Star Party – Thursday (confirmed)

White Tank Mountain Library – Telescope Talk (confirmed)

El Mirage Library – Thursday, January 25th Moon and Star Party (confirmed)

6 – Future Club Field Trip Ideas: Kitt Peak National Observatory (Tucson, AZ), Meteor Lab (ASU, Tempe, AZ), Mirror Lab (UA, Tucson), East Valley Observatory, Very Large Array (Socorro, New Mexico), Animas New Mexico (Dark Sky Site)

7 – Other Business

A Star Party was scheduled for this Saturday, January 6, but the weather might not cooperate, so we will keep you posted.

Also, tonight at 5:30 there was an Astro-Imaging meeting before the regular WVAC meeting; it will be announced if there will be another Astro-Imaging session before next month's regular meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Minutes submitted by Bud & Betsy Johnson, via email on January 2, 2024

Minutes approved by: _____ Date _____
Bob Randle, WVAC President